



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

MITT ROMNEY
GOVERNOR

KERRY HEALEY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

RONALD PRESTON
SECRETARY

CHRISTINE C. FERGUSON
COMMISSIONER

MEMO

TO: MA Hospital Emergency Room Directors, Nurse Managers, and Social Work Directors
FROM: Sally Fogerty, Associate Commissioner
DATE: September 15, 2004
RE: Clarification of DPH-Supported Rape Crisis Services and ED resources for responding to patients who may have been sexually assaulted

The following confidential services are provided by DPH-funded Rape Crisis Centers throughout Massachusetts (see attached list):

- 24 hour hotline staffed by trained rape crisis counselors. These hotlines provide telephone counseling, support, information and referrals for sexual assault survivors and their loved ones as well as for professionals who work with survivors.
- Free short-term, crisis intervention individual and group sexual assault counseling by appointment
- Assistance with police reporting and court proceedings if the survivor chooses these options
- Immediate response by rape crisis counselors on-site at hospitals may be available within limited areas and hours based on FY05 funding levels
- Professional consultation and training on sexual assault issues

Please advise ED staff treating patients who may have been sexually assaulted to:

- Contact the local rape crisis center hotline when a patient who may have been sexually assaulted presents to the emergency department
- Ask the rape crisis center if a counselor is available to come to the hospital (may be available on a limited basis)
- If a counselor is available to respond on-site, ask the patient if s/he is interested in seeing a counselor and then let the rape crisis counselor know that the patient would like the counselor to come. Also ask family member(s) or friend(s) present if they would like to speak to a counselor, as a counselor also can be requested to support these individuals
- If a counselor is NOT available to come to the hospital, ask the patient if s/he would like to talk with a rape crisis counselor by telephone, and provide a private area and telephone from which the patient may call the rape crisis hotline
- Provide the rape crisis center hotline number to the patient as part of aftercare instructions

Please also advise ED staff treating patients who may have been sexually assaulted to:

- Contact the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner on-call if the hospital is a DPH-designated SANE site.

- Follow all applicable medical protocols and regulations. The MDPH Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Protocols provide up-to-date practice standards regarding treatment issues for sexual assault survivors such as STD and pregnancy prophylaxis, as well as mandated reporting and evidence collection information. These protocols provide important guidelines for non-SANE hospitals and are required by designated SANE sites. Protocols may be obtained from the SANE Program at www.mass.gov/dph/fch/sane or 617-624-5432.
- As required by M.G.L. Chapter 112, Section 12 ½, complete a Provider Sexual Crime Report form and fax to EOPS, 617-727-5356 and the local public safety authority where the assault occurred. Do not write patient name, address or other identifying information on the PCSR. To ensure patient privacy and safety, this report is anonymous. Questions about the PSCR can be directed to the EOPS Statistical Analysis Center www.mass.gov/ccj/sac.htm or 617-727-6300.
- If the assault may have occurred within 5 days of the ED visit and the patient is 12 years or older, offer to collect evidence with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety-issued Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kit (SAEC Kit). The forensic exam may only be completed in accordance with the protocols enclosed in the kit, including informed consent, and patients may accept or decline any parts of the exam. More information about the SAEC Kit can be obtained from the EOPS Kit Program www.mas.gov/ccj/saec.htm or 617-727-6300. Standards for pediatric response are under development and information may be obtained from the SANE Program at 617-624-5432. The current SAEC kit is not designed for children under age 12, who may receive necessary treatment and referral to their local Children's Advocacy Center, listed at www.machildrensalliance.org.

For more information, please contact your local rape crisis center or the MDPH Sexual Assault Prevention and Survivor Services Program at www.mass.gov/dph/fch/sapss or 617-624-5457. Thank you for your dedication to meeting patient needs during these challenging times.